

## Statement on Diversity / Inclusiveness

### Adopted by the Community Advisory Committee – March 10, 2005

SOY has a community development mandate with a mentoring and cultural/arts focus to reach out to, support, and celebrate queer and trans youth<sup>1</sup> from diverse backgrounds. Innovative and dynamic, SOY invites in and draws upon the creativity of queer youth in all aspects of its organization<sup>2</sup>. SOY develops programs to address the complex social issues faced by queer youth, including untapped creativity, marginalization, rejection/ isolation, neglect/violence, poverty/lack of power and privilege, as well as discrimination and harassment/bashing.

As a community of youth and adults, SOY creates a welcoming atmosphere and develops programs that reflect its interest in social justice. To ensure increasing diversity, SOY, on an annual basis, assesses its progress by reviewing which social identities [e.g. race, class, gender, (dis)abilities] the organization makes visible and affirms and which ones require more visibility and recognition in the future.

SOY's annual review for increasing diversity includes an assessment of:

- The composition of its participants, staff, volunteers and Community Advisory Committee (CAC).
- Its methods for involving youth in decision-making, including its success at pairing youth and adult CAC members to support informed/skilled involvement.
- Its programming, including its:
  - ◆ methods for increasing accessibility,
  - ◆ program development and delivery,
  - ◆ communication plans and programs,
  - ◆ orientation to welcome new participants/members, and its
  - ◆ leadership development for youth, especially in the area of group process and facilitation within diverse organizations.

Based on this review, SOY develops goals for increasing diversity and accessibility. SOY also ensures that all its organizational processes are consistent with this Statement on Diversity/Inclusiveness.

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<sup>1</sup> Queer captures a diversity of sexual/gender identities and sexual orientations/preferences. Primarily it includes lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, inter-sexed and questioning youth, however, it also makes space for emerging sexual identities that find their voices in the queer community.

<sup>2</sup> SOY is a program of Sherbourne Health Centre (SHC) and is governed by its policies and procedures.

## **Statement on Confidentiality**

### **Adopted by the Community Advisory Committee – March 10, 2005**

SOY is a program of Sherbourne Health Centre (SHC) and is governed by its policies and procedures, including its policy of Confidentiality (See Attachment A: Section II Policy Number 2.3).

SOY's Mentoring and Housing Program has its own requirements for confidentiality that are outlined in the SOY Policy and Procedure Manual for the Mentoring Program for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transsexual and Transgender youth (See Attachment B)

To assist SOY participants/members to understand the importance of keeping confidences and respecting privacy, SOY uses the following guiding principles in its orientation for new participants/members:

- Although staff, facilitators and volunteer mentors exchange needed information about SOY youth participants, information about the private lives of SOY members is considered private and is not released without reason or consent.
- Gossip and hurtful comments are damaging to the individual and to the organization. It is everyone's role to stop and prevent gossip.
- Information that is overheard by accident should not be shared.
- SOY's Program Manager must be informed of any safety threats, to self or others, and of criminal activity and will act on this information appropriately.

SOY also requires that its Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members and its volunteers sign an Agreement of Confidentiality (See Attachments C and D).

## **Statement on Conflict of Interest**

**Adopted by the Community Advisory Committee – March 10, 2005**

SOY is a program of Sherbourne Health Centre (SHC) and is governed by its policies and procedures, including a requirement to declare any conflicts of interest. (See Attachment A: SHC Conflict of Interest or Duty Policy, approved by Governance Committee February 23, 2004).

To assist SOY volunteers (youth and adult), Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members and staff to declare conflicts of interest, SOY, in its orientation for new participants/members uses the following guiding principles:

- SOY members will excuse themselves from decisions that could result in, or be seen to result in, personal profit or gain.
- SOY members will excuse themselves from decisions involving other SOY members with whom they have or have had an intimate and/or intense relationship.
- All hiring and volunteer appointments will use fair and understandable processes, consistent with standard practices for not-for-profit community organizations.
- SOY members will excuse themselves from decisions where they have, or could be seen to have, an undeclared, personal interest.
- SOY members will consult with and declare any potential conflicts of interest with either the Program Manager or the CAC Chair.

## **Statement on Interpersonal Issues / Conflict Resolution**

### **Adopted by the Community Advisory Committee – March 10, 2005**

The goal of SOY's Statement on Diversity/Inclusiveness is to assist SOY in becoming an increasingly diverse and inclusive community organization<sup>3</sup> that offers an innovative leadership program for queer youth from diverse backgrounds. While this goal leads to a dynamic organization, in some instances it can also lead to interpersonal issues and conflicts.

SOY handles interpersonal issues and/or prevents conflicts<sup>4</sup> in the following ways:

1. If a SOY member (youth or adult volunteer) has a complaint of harassment and/or discrimination, SOY's Program Manager will give the complainant a print copy of SCH's harassment policy (Section II, Policy Number 2.5). The Program Manager will explain the SHC process to the complainant, unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case the Program Manager will refer the complainant to the appropriate SHC supervisor.
2. SOY provides orientation programs for new members that highlight diversity and inclusiveness. SOY also provides leadership development for youth in group process and facilitation within diverse organizations.
3. SOY encourages lively debate. It encourages its members to speak out as well as to learn from differences. SOY is thoughtful about creating safe atmospheres that demonstrate respect and tolerance for difference.
4. SOY encourages its members to talk about/name things that make them uncomfortable at SOY and to seek support to make changes. SOY encourages its members to resolve conflicts in ways that lead to a deeper understanding of different interests and perspectives, within the context of equity.
5. SOY challenges demeaning and/or hurtful comments about social/individual difference<sup>5</sup>. If anyone hears and/or is hurt by demeaning comments, SOY will support individuals to address these comments themselves or will provide an advocate to speak on their behalf.
6. SOY commits to learning from interpersonal issues and conflicts within the organization and to considering implications for program change.

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<sup>3</sup> SOY is a program of Sherbourne Health Centre (SHC) and is governed by its policies and procedures.

<sup>4</sup> Staff conflict is governed by SHC Conflict Resolution Policy, Section II, Policy Number 2.8.

<sup>5</sup> Comments about social/individual difference includes put downs because of gender identity, sexual orientation and/or sexual preference. It also includes put downs of women, Black people and people of colour, people with disabilities, and people with less social power and money. In addition, it includes personal put downs, such as comments made about body types and facial features as well as clothing.